Promotion of tourism in Tamil Nadu

4313. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether festivals are being conducted by her Ministry in Tamil Nadu as a step to attract more tourists;

(b) if so, the names of the festivals organized in Tamil Nadu during the last three years; and

(c) the details of funds, if any, released to Tamil Nadu for conducting such festivals during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir. Organisation of fairs and festivals and events of National importance is the responsibility of the State Government concerned. However, Ministry of Tourism provides financial support for celebration of festivals on the basis of project proposals prioritized every year in consultation with State Governments/UT Administrations.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Tourism provided funds for the celebration of following festivals in the State of Tamil Nadu during the last three years:

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Name of the Festival	Funds sanctioned
2002-03	Dance Festival at Mamallapuram	5.00
2003-04	Mahabalipuram Dance Festival	15.00
	Chithrai Festival	5.00
	Chettinad Festival	5.00
2004-05	Mamallapuram Dance Festival	15.00

Decline in foreign tourists due to terrorist activities

†4314. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of tourists has continuously declined in the recent past due to terrorist activities prevailing in the country;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that Government have appealed to certain countries to lift the restrictions imposed by them;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the percentage of decline witnessed in the income earned from tourists; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government to promote foreign tourists and to bring about improvement in the negative image prevailing regarding security aspect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (d) No, Sir. There has been a continuous increase in both foreign tourist arrivals in the country as also foreign exchange earnings from tourism in the last 2 years. In the year 2004, an estimated 24% increase in foreign tourist arrival was witnessed over the previous year. Similarly, during the year 2004, estimated increase in foreign exchange earnings in dollar terms was about 36%.

(e) India tourism offices overseas coordinate closely with the Indian Missions abroad to keep the travel industry and media briefed to reinforce the image of India as a safe destination for travel. Besides, the Government has taken number of steps to promote tourism, including:

- Development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development of tourist circuits and destinations;
- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Centralized Electronic Media Campaign;
- Direct co-operative marketing with tour operators and wholesalers overseas;
- Greater focus in the emerging markets, particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;
- Participation in Trade Fairs and Exhibitions;
- Optimizing Editorial PR and Publicity;
- Use of Internet and web marketing;
- Generating Tourist Publications;
- Re-inforcing hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite media personnel and tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products;

- Launching of Road Shows in key source markets of Europe;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels; and
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions.

Packages offered by tour operators

4315. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that attractive packages offered by various foreign airlines and tour operators are likely to witness an increase in the number of Indians travelling abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) its impact on domestic tourism in India; and

(d) the steps being taken to attract more and more domestic tourists to different destinations in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) Promotions and packages offered by foreign airlines and tour operators have resulted in increase in outbound traffic, but its impact on domestic tourism is minimal. In 2003 the outbound traffic was 5.35 million as compared to 309 million domestic tourist visits. As per provisional estimates, domestic tourist visits has further increased by approximately 20% in 2004 while outbound traffic has increased by 16%.

(d) The steps being taken to attract more domestic tourists are development of infrastructure, advertising, participation in trade-shows, dissemination of information through print media, brochures and CD ROMs, joint promotions with State Governments/Union Territories etc.

Desalination of sea water to produce potable drinking water

4316. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering seriously to develop a cost effective technology to desalinate sea water to produce potable drinking water;